



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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July 22, 1991

TO: The Minerals File

FROM: Holland Shepherd, Reclamation Specialist and
Wayne Hedberg, Minerals Permit Supervisor *HCS*
WHT

RE: Field Inspection Aragonite Mine and Mill, M/045/031, Tooele County, Utah

Date of Inspection: July 19, 1991

Time of Inspection: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Conditions: Hot, cloudy, light rain

Participants: Lon Thomas, Thomas American Stone; Holland
Shepherd and Wayne Hedberg, DOGM

This inspection was conducted to evaluate the operator's progress in regard to the April 91 Board Order and a letter from Dianne Nielson, dated July 2, 1991, requiring partial reclamation and detailed reclamation plans from the operator. The inspection was also performed to ground-truth the maps and reclamation plans submitted by the operator on June 30, 1991.

Mine Site

The first area visited was the mine area. The operator has designated, on the mine map, the boundaries of the present post-law disturbance. We agreed with the operator's specification of responsibility for all disturbed areas, except for the waste dumps located due west of the main pit area. The waste dumps areas are designated in pink on the map, meaning pre-law disturbance. Mr. Thomas, however, committed to reclaim these areas during our inspection. This will be discussed in more depth later.

The operator has committed to reclaim all areas designated in green on the mine map, except for the small quarry area (Area 5) associated with the disturbance due east of the main pit area. Mr. Thomas indicated he wanted to keep this area open in order to mine it at a later date. This area is outside of the 5-acre active operations boundary, designated in red on the map. Area #5 is approximately .44 acres (255 ft X 76 ft) in size, so would increase the disturbed acreage to 5.44. Area #5 has been

scalped on the north and south hillsides on either side of the quarry, the hillsides which Mr. Thomas committed to reclaim by seeding and scarifying.

According to Mr. Thomas, the disturbed area, located on the ridge to the extreme south of the main pit area, was mined by a Mr. A. J. Suchar in 1987. Mr. Thomas plans to reclaim this area as well. This area will be graded, ripped and seeded. The operator will attempt to push what little soil material is available over the disturbed portions. Very little native soil material currently exists on this steep slope.

Mr. Thomas has been placing waste material on a disturbed area just east of the south pit. This area is located within the 5-acre "active operations" area (designated area #3). This material is predominately overburden, and consists mostly of fines. We explained to Mr. Thomas that this material could be used as substitute soil material for future reclamation; and suggested that all future fines (topsoils, etc.) be stockpiled and protected in this area.

A great deal of soil/fines material composes the large waste dumps located on the northeast side of the north pit, (designated area #4). Mr. Thomas intends to regrade and reseed this area this fall. We explained to the operator that this material could be used for topsoil elsewhere on the site if deficits occurred.

It was not evident to us that any reclamation had been initiated at the mine site. Recent mining activity was evident.

The operator has posted some warning and hazard signs at various locations at the site. A cable railing has been constructed along the road boundary of the south edge of the north pit.

Plant species found in the area of the mine include: spiked wheatgrass, needle and thread, indian ricegrass, cliffrose, broom snakeweed, saltbrush, blue flax, horsemint, rabbitbrush, gumweed, Great Basin wildrye and slender wheatgrass.

The operator indicated that he would like to accomplish enough reclamation to avoid having to pay another \$6,000 in 6 months. We explained to him that if he would reclaim some other disturbed portions of the site that are currently of questionable responsibility, the obligation to provide supplemental surety may be negotiable. These areas would include the two waste dumps located approximately 100 yards to the west of the main pit area on either side of the main access road.

The operator installed perimeter markers (7 foot steel fence posts), designating the corners of the 5 acre (active operational area) boundaries during our inspection.

Mill Site

The operator installed perimeter markers, designating the 5-acre (active operational area) boundaries during our inspection.

Dump area #10, on the mill site map, has been partially cleaned up. Large pieces of metal scrap remain, along with some tires. The operator has pushed dirt/fines over much of the dump area. Several thousand dollars were paid to haul off the majority of tires that were once deposited here. Some of the metal scrap has been removed as well.

The operator intends to reclaim all areas outside the 5-acre mill site area, except for the ore piles. These areas will be reclaimed over a 4-year period. Several piles of material lie outside the 5-acre boundary and are not defined on the map. Mr. Thomas indicated these piles would be reclaimed by dozing and reseeding.

No reclamation has been initiated at the mill site, other than the dump cleanup. Mr. Thomas indicated that his dozer had broken down, which has hampered his reclamation efforts.

Ore stockpiles have been designated in green on the mill site map. These areas will have 4 years before reclamation becomes mandatory. The stockpiled ore material will be processed over this period of time. The operator is currently without a generator, so the mill is inoperative.

Summary

The Division plans to review and edit (redline) the operator's detailed reclamation plans for the mill and mine sites. The plans will be returned to the operator for review and comment. We discussed having another meeting with the operator, at the Division, to discuss the plan changes and dates for performing the reclamation.

At this time, it is the Division's opinion that the operator has submitted a working document and has made acceptable verbal commitments regarding the reclamation work required at the Aragonite site.

jb
cc: Steve Brooks, BLM, Pony Express RA
Tony Gallegos, DOGM
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